

Canine Bulletin

Nebraska Task Force - 1

June 2002

Why the Assessment?

Submitted by: Elaine Sawtell

Soon NE-TF1 will conduct our first canine assessment. Determining a canine's suitability for the work it is asked to perform is common sense. Any working dog, from a competition obedience, agility or Schutzhund prospect, to a police patrol dog, drug or bomb detection dog, guide or therapy dog must possess the temperament and drives suited to the task. No serious trainer in any of these disciplines would invest time and energy into a weak or marginal dog. No police department or public agency wants to be responsible for putting unqualified dogs on the street.



Why, then, in this most important and most difficult of canine jobs do we as handlers often ignore the obvious and assume that because of our commitment to the task, we can pull out of our dogs something that is not there?

Is it possible that skillful and dedicated trainers can teach the elements of disaster search and still have a dog that does not have the heart for it?

It is my hope that every NE-TF1 handler will look positively at this opportunity to see how our canines measure up in inherent qualities. As Hakan told us at the pretest, "The people under the rubble" are counting on us.

National Disaster Search Dog Foundation Handlers Selected

Submitted by: John Huff

In close cooperation with the National Disaster Search Dog Foundation, four members of the Lincoln Fire & Rescue Department have been selected to receive certifiable canine. Selected were:



We Need to Talk...

Submitted by: Ditto

My fellow canines, I just returned from a Type I test in Colorado. I realize we are limited by the abilities and understanding of our human partners, but I saw some things we need to discuss.

This business of running all over the pile after you have found the victim has gotten out of hand. Some call it "shopping the pile." I call it leaving the victim, something that is totally unacceptable. It may be okay when your human partner is merely taking a test and knows there are a certain number of possible victims and no more. But what about reality? What about the entirely different scent picture we will face then? Even those of us with "bombproof" alerts and experience with cadaver and multiple, real-life distractions may find it difficult to pinpoint that spark of life from the live victim. How will our handlers and those counting on us ever know unless we tell them plainly and repeatedly?

And speaking of distractions, I watched 18 handlers send their dogs to look for people on the limited access pile. Only one of them allowed his dog to relieve himself before starting on his mission. Many of them jumped their dogs straight from an air conditioned vehicle to the rubble pile. How real is THAT? Nevertheless, practically all of my

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fellow canines left the job, Our Job, to relieve themselves and check out who had been there before. Does that sound like Search Drive? If it were your handler's best friend or grandson under that rubble, would you want to be caught smelling what Gus had for breakfast?

About directability, didn't your handler teach you anything but a ball diamond pattern in an open field? Surely after you passed your Basic test (and hopefully before!) you learned to take direction anywhere any time, didn't you?

This issue of handler dependence. We are Search Dogs, not Toy Poodles! Why do some of you feel if you can't find a victim in the first 20 feet of a pile you must return and check on your handler? Are you afraid they're going to get in that air conditioned car and leave? Oh, I know, I know it can be very confusing when you go on an out-of-sight search and it takes longer than 20 seconds and you return to ask, "Duh, what was I out here for?" only to be called off the pile and praised and maybe even get a game of tug before being sent again. Talk about confusing!

It occurs to me I may be sounding a little critical. I also saw some wonderful, dedicated searching in Colorado, the kind that only us canines can do. I was inspired and encouraged by some teams. Years ago I had a sticker on my crate. It said, "Live to Search...Search to Save Lives." Maybe we should all be reminded of the importance of our mission.

Finally, I have not had a flawless record in recertifying, but if you have taken the Type I multiple times without passing, perhaps you should do what you know in your heart is right...get your handler in a quiet place and tell him or her, "We need to talk..."

How Do I Submit Items for the Canine Bulletin

Mail, E-mail, or Fax items to:

Julie Marget

Lincoln Fire & Rescue

1801 "Q" Street

Lincoln, NE 68508

jmarget@ci.lincoln.ne.us

Fax: 441-8292

Phone: 441-8352

Address/

Phone #

Changes Also
contact Julie



nn Wichmann, Colorado, is expecting a litter of Labs from her Type I dog, Torie. Anyone interested should contact her at (303) 776-3957. They will be born July 1st.



Mail your
training logs to:
Sandy Yost
1801 "Q" Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

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Firefighter Jay Adams

Fire Apparatus Operator John Bills

Firefighter/Medic Rod Ford

Firefighter/Medic Jason Ortman

Alternates were:

Captain Leo Benes

Fire Apparatus Operator Tom
Mann

The goal of the NDSDF is to
provide trained certifiable dogs for
up to four qualified members of the

department for the benefit of the
Task Force. The dogs will be
trained to the basic level of
certification. These new handlers
will work to become a certified
team with their new partner. The
dogs will be available in late 2002 or
early 2003, to join their new
families. These new Canine search
specialist will add depth to the Task
Force at this critical position.

USAR Canine Training Calendar 2002

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	Newsletter Articles Due
	Canine Bulletin Distributed
	Springfield Training
	Lincoln Training
	Holiday